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Breathalyzer Machine Joins O.P.P. Measures Suspect's Alcohol Content

—Staff Photo

NEXT TIME YOU TELL a policeman you've "only had one drink" and he is inclined to doubt your sincerity or your sobriety, he'll be able to prove you right or wrong with a new machine just acquired by the North Halton O.P.P. detachment in Milton. It's a breathalyzer, that measures a suspect's breath to determine the alcohol content in his bloodstream — and it's foolproof. Sgt. C. G. Wilkinson and Const. Carmen Wright, who are both trained to operate the complicated box, are shown with the breathalyzer.

By Roy Downs

Newest addition to the crime-fighting facilities at the North Halton Ontario Provincial Police detachment in Milton, is a breathalyzer machine — a device for measuring the alcohol content in a suspect's blood.

The small box-like affair is a maze of tubes, meters, photo-electric cells, lights and gauges that tests a suspect's breath and comes up with a dial reading that shows exactly how much alcohol exists in the suspect's blood at the time of the test. And it's absolutely fool-proof.

"Will Not Convict"

"The breathalyzer will not convict you — nor will it dismiss you," pointed out Sergeant C. G. Wilkinson, who heads the 23-man detachment covering the county and township roads in Esquesing and Nassagaweya Townships, as well as provincial highways 401, 25 and 7 that pass through North Halton area.

The machine simply provides a figure which a police officer can enter into court as evidence. Details of a physical test will help the magistrate determine whether an accused is normal, impaired, or drunk, and results of the breathalyzer, urine, saliva or blood tests are used to substantiate the evidence.

Sgt. Wilkinson took a two-week cram course in operation of the breathalyzer in 1958, when he was with the Oakville O.P.P. detachment. At that time the Oakville office did breath tests for a wide area surrounding Oakville, and he estimates he has completed over 200 tests with the machine.

Tests Drivers

Last month, Constable Carmen Wright of North Halton O.P.P. took a similar course and received a certificate signifying his ability to operate one. The new machine — valued at $800 — arrived a couple of weeks ago and to date has been used for a few tests on drivers suspected of being under the influence.

The two officers point out the machine's reading only provides a figure on alcohol content. This figure must then be applied to a chart called an "Alco-Dial" to determine whether a person is seriously impaired or not. Based on a suspect's weight, the testing officer can relate the breathalyzer's answer in percentages, to the actual number of ounces of liquor, beer or wine the suspect has in his bloodstream.

And, if given the alcoholic beverage the suspect consumed, and the time period during which the alcohol was consumed, they can even determine how many drinks a suspect originally had.

Officers emphasize that the breathalyzer is just one of the sobriety tests given a suspected drinking driver. They also take urine and saliva samples which are tested at the Provincial Crime Laboratory in Toronto, and a blood test if possible. In each case, two samples are taken at different times, to give a more true reading of the suspect's condition. Two breathalyzer tests are also taken as well, and both readings are considered in evidence.

The officer interviews the suspect and submits him to a physical test. They fill out a report on the suspect's appearance, color of face, clothes, attitude, appearance of eyes, and speech. A suspect may be asked to close his eyes and tip his head back, to see if he weaves; he may be given the finger-to-nose test; or be asked to pick up coins off the floor; or be instructed to walk along a hallway or around the room.

Forms Opinion

Each word and each movement is carefully watched, for each portion of the tests reveals the suspect's condition and enables the investigating officer to formulate an opinion which he will be asked to give — under oath — in court.

"The breathalyzer can sometimes get an accused man off the hook, too," Sgt. Wilkinson explained. A suspect can have all the physical appearances of being drunk, while he is actually an ailing diabetic or heavily drugged. In this case, the breathalyzer definitely works in the suspect's favor, insofar as alcohol is concerned.

"If we give him a breath test and there is no indication of alcohol, we rush him to a hospital immediately," said the Sgt. The driver can still be charged with impaired driving if his ability is impaired by a narcotic drug.

How it Works:

Here's how the breathalyzer works:

The subject blows into a plastic tube that leads to a cylinder containing a piston. The pressure of the breath causes the piston to move to a level where two vent-holes open, letting the first breath (from the mouth) escape. When the subject has blown as long and as hard as he can, only the air from the deepest portion of the lungs is trapped in the cylinder. This air gives the best true reading of the alcohol in his system.

This air in the cylinder left the mouth at a temperature of 31 to 34 degrees centigrade. It must first be heated up to 45 to 50 degrees.

Sensitive Liquid

A valve then reverses, and the breath is bubbled through an alcohol-sensitive solution, potassium dichromate and sulphuric acid. If alcohol is present in the breath, the alcohol-sensitive solution changes color. A photo-electric meter then records light shining through the solution, to give a reading on the dial of the machine.

The breathalyzer is always tested with another vial of the alcohol-sensitive solution, before and after testing the subject's breath.

Formally Approved

The machine was invented about 10 years ago, by Professor Robert F. Borkenstein, director of the Indiana State Police crime lab. Dr. Ward Smith of the Ontario Attorney-General's crime laboratory helped him perfect it. It has been approved by the technical sub-committee of the National Safety Councils Committee.

Glorious Record of Lorne Scots

This is the first of a series of articles dealing with the history of the Lorne Scots. In October the Peel Dufferin Halton militia unit will be presented with its colors by a representative of Her Majesty, during the World Plowing Match at Major Conn Smythe's Caledon Farms.

Foreword

This brief history of The Lorne Scots Regiment and Regiments from which it was formed was prepared from the scanty records in the Regimental Archives, including the incomplete War Diaries of the units that served in World War II. The information about the first Scottish dress was confirmed by Lt. Col. Alexander Noble, who joined the regiment in 1891 and has a keen recollection of the earlier days of the Halton Regiment, the Lorne Rifles.

The late William Perkins Bull turned over to the Peel and Dufferin Regiment several files, including records of officers' service and nominal rolls used in the preparation of his book "From Brock to Currie." These documents filled in many gaps in the regimental history. The late Lt.-Col. H. W. Jackson, M.B.E., E.D. while director of war records service, supplied war service records and extracts from part II orders of the overseas units. Col. Louis Keene, while commanding the Halton Rifles, had gathered letters, newspaper articles, pictures and extracts from earlier histories. These records filled four large scrap books and were an important source of information about the early history.

It is hoped that this short history will stimulate further research.

The chairman of the Historical Committee extends his thanks to the following committee members for their assistance — Hon. Lt. Col., Lt. Col. J. R. Barber, E.D., C.D.; Lt. Col. S. R. Charters, C.D.; Maj. B. F. Bunt, C.D. and Lt. J. W. Moore. The revision of the previous historical booklet was commenced during the term in command of Lt. Col. A. Kemp, C.D. and completed under the command of Lt. Col. E. F. Conover, C.D.

R. V. Conover, O.B.E., V.D.
Colonel
Chairman Historical Committee.

The Sedentary Militia

The colony of Upper Canada, now the Province of Ontario in the Dominion of Canada, was established by the Constitutional Act of the British Parliament in 1791. The government consisted of a Lieut.-Governor, Executive Council and a Legislative Assembly, elected by the citizens. For administrative purpose the area was divided into districts and gradually townships were surveyed and settled. The earliest areas settled were those facing on the St. Lawrence River, Lakes Ontario and Erie. The area now comprising the counties of Halton, Dufferin and Peel was first settled in the present townships of Toronto, Trafalgar and Nelson and it was known as part of the home district, later part of the county of York.

Relations between the newly formed Republic to the south of the Great Lakes and the British Government were constantly disturbed by boundary disputes. In Upper Canada settlement had been close to the four important military posts, Kingston, Niagara, Detroit and Michilimacinac. When the latter three posts finally were ceded to the United States by the Jay Treaty of 1793, some of the population again migrated to British Territory. The aggression of the expansionists in the United States against the Indian tribes kept the frontier in constant turmoil and, as the small garrisons of British soldiers stationed at various small forts along the frontier were not adequate to protect the scattered settlements, the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada in 1793 passed a militia act enrolling all able bodied men between the ages of 16 and 50 for service in the defence of the newly formed colony.

Formed Into Regiments

These enrolled men were formed into regiments or battalions and given the name of the district from which they were formed. There were several battalions of York Militia and the 2nd Regiment of York Militia was formed in the Townships of Toronto, Trafalgar and Nelson. In case of mobilization, arms, accoutrements, ammunition and uniforms were to be drawn from garrison stores. From these regiments, flank companies of volunteers were attached to the regular forces in time of danger. During the early eighteen hundreds the crisis between the United States and Great Britain had become more acute and at the same time Great Britain was deeply involved in the War with Napoleon. The British Navy controlled the high seas with resulting blockading of American ships from Continental Europe. By 1811 a war party, "the Warhawks," formed in the newer states west of the Allegheny Mountains, proclaimed it was the manifest destiny of the United States to control all the North American Continent.

Early in 1812 the Legislature of Upper Canada passed a new militia act which provided for the formation of two flank companies in each Regiment of Militia. These companies were to be volunteers, but if sufficient numbers were not provided, the remainder were to be selected by lot from the regiment.

War Declared

President Monroe declared war on Great Britain on 17 June, 1812, and preparation was made to invade Canada from Detroit, across the Niagara Frontier and up the Richilieu River to Montreal and Quebec. Major General Isaac Brock, Lt. Governor of Upper Canada, mobilized the flank companies. A flank company of the second York Militia, raised in the Townships of Toronto, Trafalgar and Nelson, commanded by Capt. John Chisholm served with General Brock at the capture of Detroit, and later at Queenston Heights. Brock's last words "Push on York volunteers," referred to Capt. Chisholm's Flank Company which was, on the morning of the battle, stationed on the brow of the heights at Queenston, Capt. William Applegarth's Flank Company from the 2nd Yorks was also present at Queenston. The officers and men of these companies were granted land for this service. Later flank companies from the Second York Militia served at Stoney Creek, Chippawa and Lundy's Lane. No medals were issued to the militia for service in any of these engagements, nor were battle honours awarded to the militia.

In 1816 the Gore District was established. It included other townships and the townships of Trafalgar, Nelson, Esquesing and Nassagaweya, now the county of Halton. On the 10th July, 1816, a Militia General Order redesignated the 2nd Regiment of York Militia the First Regiment of Gore Militia. The Second Regiment of Gore Militia, with limits in Trafalgar Township was authorized in 1821, Lt. Col. Graham Nelles commanding officer and Captains John, William and George Chisholm as three of the company commanders. The 5th Regiment of Gore Militia was enrolled in the Township of Nassagaweya and Esquesing Townships with Lt. Col. William Jarvis commanding. The 8th Regiment of Gore Militia, with limits in Nelson Township appears in the Militia List of 1939. Col. William Chisholm was gazetted to command on the 3rd of May, 1830.

Annual Muster

The training of the militia consisted of an annual muster and some drill. The men were armed with their own weapons and wore whatever uniform they personally possessed; a motley crew. Annual training days were held in each regimental area, usually the Sovereign's Birthday. During the abortive MacKenzie Rebellion in 1837, the militia was called out to defend the capital 'York' against insurgents. A detachment from the Gore Militia, raised in the townships of Trafalgar and Nelson, proceeded under Col. Wm. Chisholm to York. Col. Chisholm commanded one of the divisions of the militia in the movement to Montgomery's Tavern on December 7th, 1837. Later Col. George Chisholm and the 2nd Gore Militia served on the Niagara Frontier at Chippawa in January, 1838. A few took part in the cutting of the "Caroline," a ship used by MacKenzie's followers to carry supplies to Navy Island, intended for a future invasion of Canada.

In 1846 the militia districts were changed. The County of Halton was organized and six battalions of militia were formed in the county; first Battalion Halton Militia, with limits in Trafalgar Township; 2nd Battalion with limits in Nelson Township; 3rd Battalion with limits in Flamboro East and West; 4th Battalion with limits in Beverly Township; 5th Battalion, with limits in Dumfries Township; 6th Battalion, with limits in Esquesing and Nassagaweya Townships.

In 1851 Sedentary Militia District No. 3 was formed with Lt. Col. George K. Chisholm to command the First Battalion Halton Militia on 11 Dec., 1851, with limits in the township of Trafalgar. The Second Battalion Halton Militia, with Lt.-Col. Hiram Smith, dated 21st of April, 1853, was limited to part of the Township of Nelson. The third Battalion Halton Militia, with limits in the Township of Trafalgar with Lt. Col. George Brown, was gazetted 13 May, 1853. Lt. Col. William Clay was gazetted 12 May, 1856, to command the 4th Battalion Halton Militia limited to the Township of Esquesing. Lt. Col. Alexander McNaughton was gazetted 13 May, 1853, to command the 5th Battalion Halton Militia with limits in the Township of Nassagaweya, Lt. Col. Adam Sproat commanded the 6th Battalion Halton Militia from 2nd of May, 1856, limits concession 1 to 7 in the Township of Esquesing. The Battalions enrolled between 450 and 600 men.

The area now known as Peel county was part of the county of York. The second Regiment of West York Militia was authorized 17 May, 1822 with Col. William Thompson in command, limits to Townships of Etobicoke and Toronto. The 7th Regiment North York Militia was authorized with limits in Chinguacousy and Toronto Gore with Lt. Col. John Scarlett to command from 16th July, 1835. Lt. Col. William Thompson commanded from 16th July, 1839 to 1845. The eighth Regiment North York Militia was authorized with limits townships of Caledon and Albion. Col. John Connell Baldwin to command 12 Oct. 1835.

On 23 December, 1846, the county of Peel formed a Regiment division comprising the battalions of Peel Militia, with limits in the Township of Toronto (formerly First Battalion York Militia) with Major William Birdsall to command. The Second Battalion Peel Militia comprised a battalion division in the township of Chinguacousy (formerly 7th Battalion York Militia) with Major William Lynch to command. The Third Battalion — Peel Militia comprised as a battalion, the Gore of Toronto (formerly part of 9th Yorks) with Lt. Col. Cam Price as commanding officer. The Fourth Battalion Peel comprised as a battalion division of Township of Caledon (formerly part of the 8th Yorks) April 1st, 1856, commanded by Lt.-Col. Dan Switzer.

The Fifth Battalion Peel comprised as a battalion area the Township of Albion (formerly part of the 8th Yorks). In 1856 the unit was commanded by Lt.-Col. Charles Mitchell. Toronto township was divided on 12 Jan., 1853, east of Hurontario street to be the First Battalion Peel Militia and the 2nd Battalion Peel to be the area west of Hurontario street. Major William Birdsall was transferred to command as Lt.-Col. of the 2nd Battalion Peel Militia. The Sixth Battalion was formed from personnel of the Second Battalion in Chinguacousy township commanded by Lt.-Col. John Lynch in 1855. The Seventh Battalion was formed in the northern part of Chinguacousy commanded by Lt.-Col. Francis Campbell.

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